(a) whether British Government has offered to sell or lease frigators and destroyers to Pakistan;

(b) the number of warships and their capability proposed to be sold by British Government;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to match Indian warships with that of Pakistan after acquiring the warships;

(d) whether supply of warships is against the assurance given by the British Government to Indian Government; and

(e) if so, whether British Government has been asked to stop supply of warships ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA) : (a) Government are aware of reports of the British Government's interest in selling some naval vessels, which are being decommissioned by the British Navy, to various countries including Pakistan.

(b) As per reports, the British Government have offered for sale six type 21 (Amazon Class) and four Leander Class frigates. These warships conform to specifications typical of British frigates of their type and carry weapons systems which give them a multiple role.

(c) Government keep a close watch on all developments which have a bearing on national security and take appropriate measures to ensure full defence preparedness at all times.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Government's general concern about Pakistan's acquiring weapons systems beyond its legitimate defence requirements have been and are being conveyed to all concerned foreign Governments.

Case against Indian ambassy in U.K.

1068. SHRI J.S. RAJU :
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY :
DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the news item entitled "Indian Government asked to pay lawyer's fee" appearing in the Pioneer (Kanpur issue) dated the 10th April, 1993;

(b) if so, total amount which the Indian Government has to bear in this case and its break-up;

(c) whether the counter claim was filed;

(d) if so, the decision of Government thereon; and

(e) who is responsible for negligence which resulted in court case ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The news item refers to legal proceedings initiated in the London High Court by M/s Zaiwalla & Co., a firm of Solicitors, against the Government of India and some Indian Public Sector Undertakings, over the payment of legal fees.

(b) On 7 April, 1993, the London High Court delivered its judgement on the principal issues presented to the Court. The judgement does not contain orders on financial aspects and costs involved which are yet to be determined by the Court.

(c) No, Sir. No counter claim or appeal has been filed by the Government after the judgement was delivered.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The litigation was initiated by M/s Zaiwalla & Co. who refused to accept all reasonable offers made for an out-of-Court settlement. As a result, there was no option available to the Government except to proceed with the litigation. As such, the question of negligence does not arise.

Issues discussed by Indian and Thai P.Ms.

1069. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI :
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what specific bilateral matters were discussed with the Thai Prime Minister during his recent visit to Thailand;

(b) what are the points on which agreement has been reached; and

(c) what steps are being taken to implement the proposals agreed to by both the Governments ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA) : (a) to (c) During the recent visit to Thailand, the Prime Minister discussed with the Prime Minister of Thailand various issues of common concern to both countries. In particular, discussions were held on bilateral relations in various fields, such as trade, economic, investment, educational, tourism, cultural, technical and scientific cooperation, as well as people-to-people contacts.

The two Prime Ministers agreed that India and Thailand should maintain close contacts and exchanges for continued cooperation. It was decided to draw up a time bound action programme for cooperation in specific projects which would be evaluated and expanded after one year. The private sector is expected to play its role in increasing trade and investment both ways. The PM of Thailand accepted the invitation to visit India.

The two sides also took note of the growing menace of drug-trafficking and crossborder terrorism. Recognising that international terrorism in all its manifestations is of common concern to all nations, the two sides reiterated their resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms. Both sides also agreed to maintain and strengthen their cooperation in combating drug-trafficking and its nexus with terrorism.

Pending Applications for Passports in Chandigarh and Jalandhar

1070. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) how many applications for passports are lying pending in the Passport Office in Chandigarh and Jalandhar and for how long;

(b) whether it is a fact that people have to wait for more than a year to get their passports in the normal course which cause them great hardship and inconvenience.

(c) whether an eight point guidelines has been issued by the Ministry for issuing out of turn passports and if so, what are these guidelines;

(d) whether applicants waiting for more than eight months for their passports have also to approach for out of turn passport, whereas in other countries passports are issued within a week;